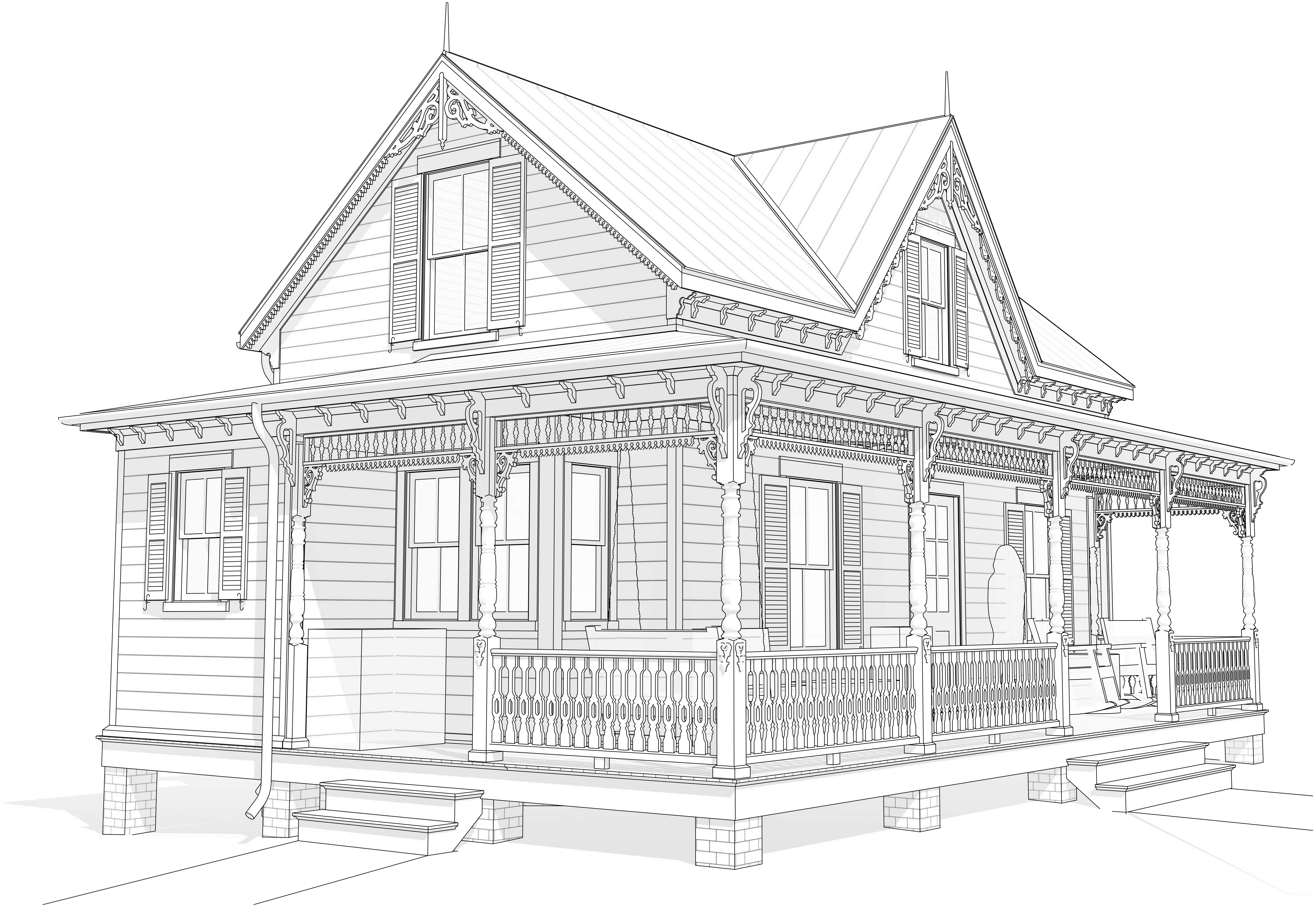


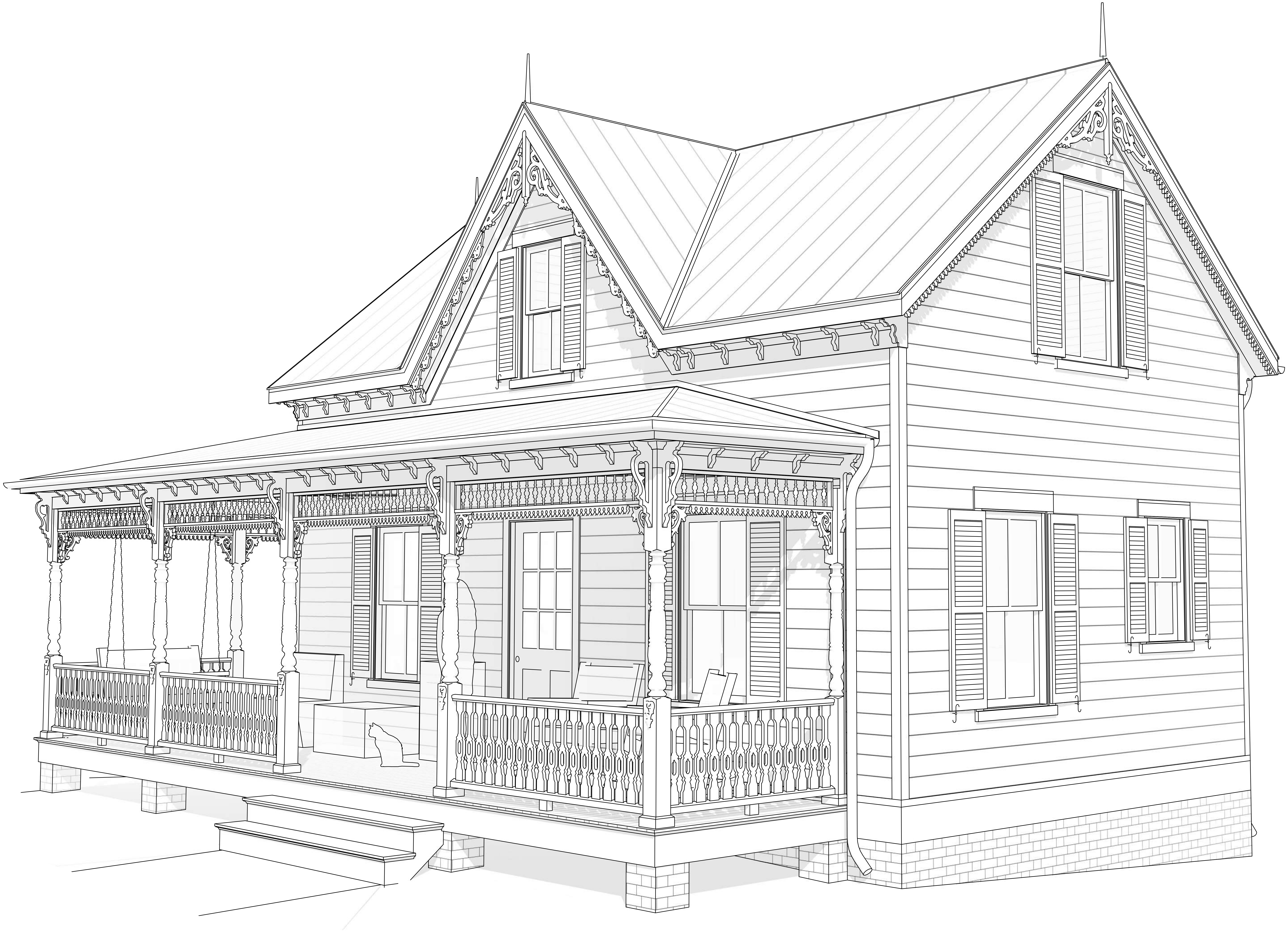
The Backyard Farmhouse is based on an iconic archetype from the 1800s— a 1.5-story house with a front-facing gable. Such designs were most common in cold climates because they had a minimal amount of interior volume (therefore easier to heat in the winter). They also used space and material efficiently. Now the compact size can be especially useful for an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU).

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

FRONT PERSPECTIVE 1

JAY OSBORNE

This version of the Backyard Farmhouse is expressive and ornate— covered with gingerbread decorations. It has a wrap-around porch, as well as some smaller additions— like an office and a mud room. Overall, it's about 850 square feet in size. Because it has a low profile, it can work with very restrictive height limits. It can therefore be built in many old neighborhoods— where it'll feel right at home.



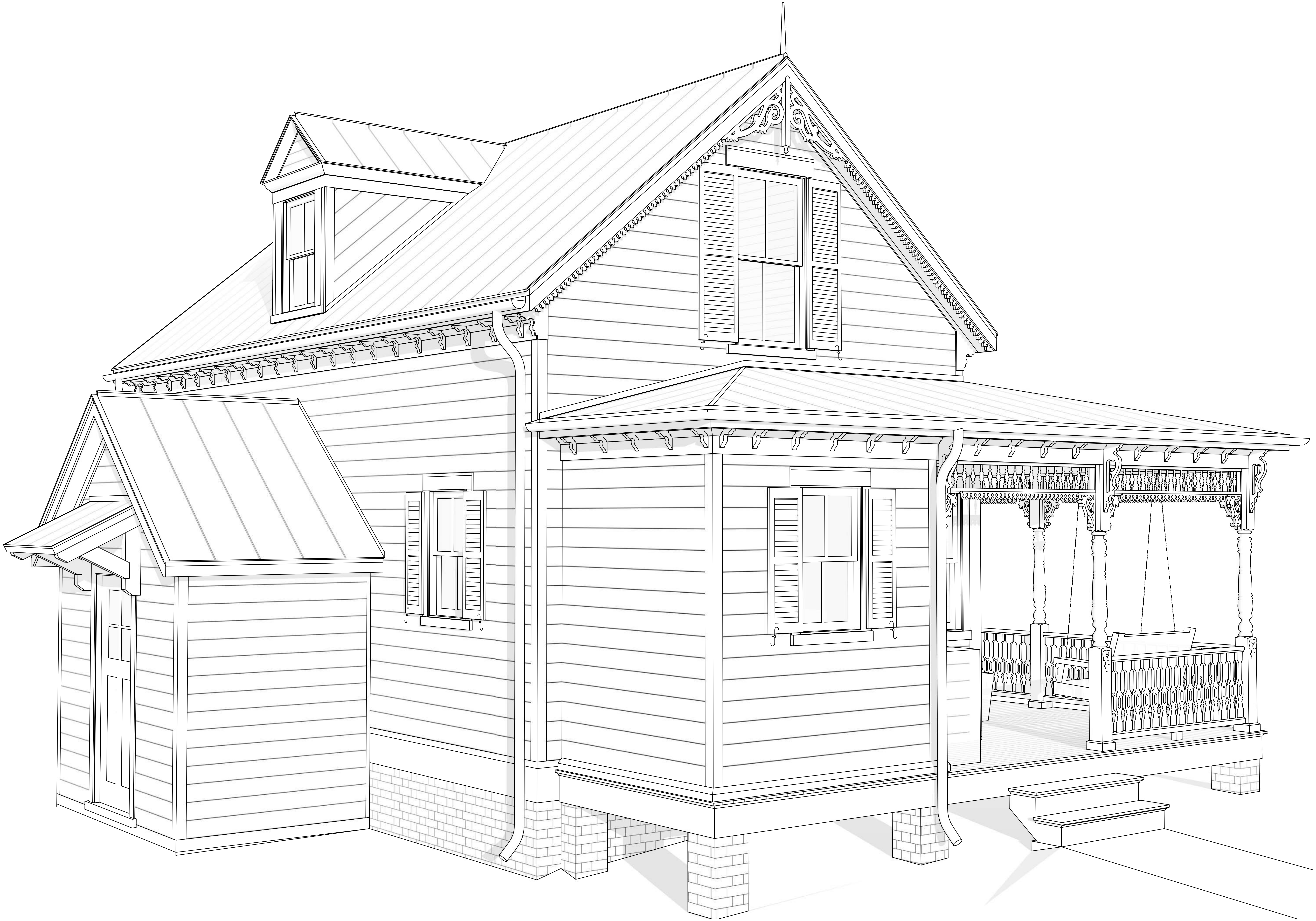
This little house is designed to be short and compact. However, because it has a crawlspace foundation, it is about a foot or two taller than it could be. Overall, it fits within an 18 foot height limit (measured from the ground to the mid-slope of the gable) or a 22-foot height limit (measured from the ground to the roof ridge). Compared to the other variations, it has a 6 inch higher ceiling at the first level.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

FRONT PERSPECTIVE 2

JAY OSBORNE

Houses usually aren't designed like this anymore. Gingerbread ornamentation is occasionally added to a new house, but it's usually a half-hearted effort. My intention was to go a little over-the-top with this design, so it would feel more like a house from the 1800s. It does take a fair bit of effort to learn how to design with gingerbread ornamentation. It may be a lost art, but it can still come back.



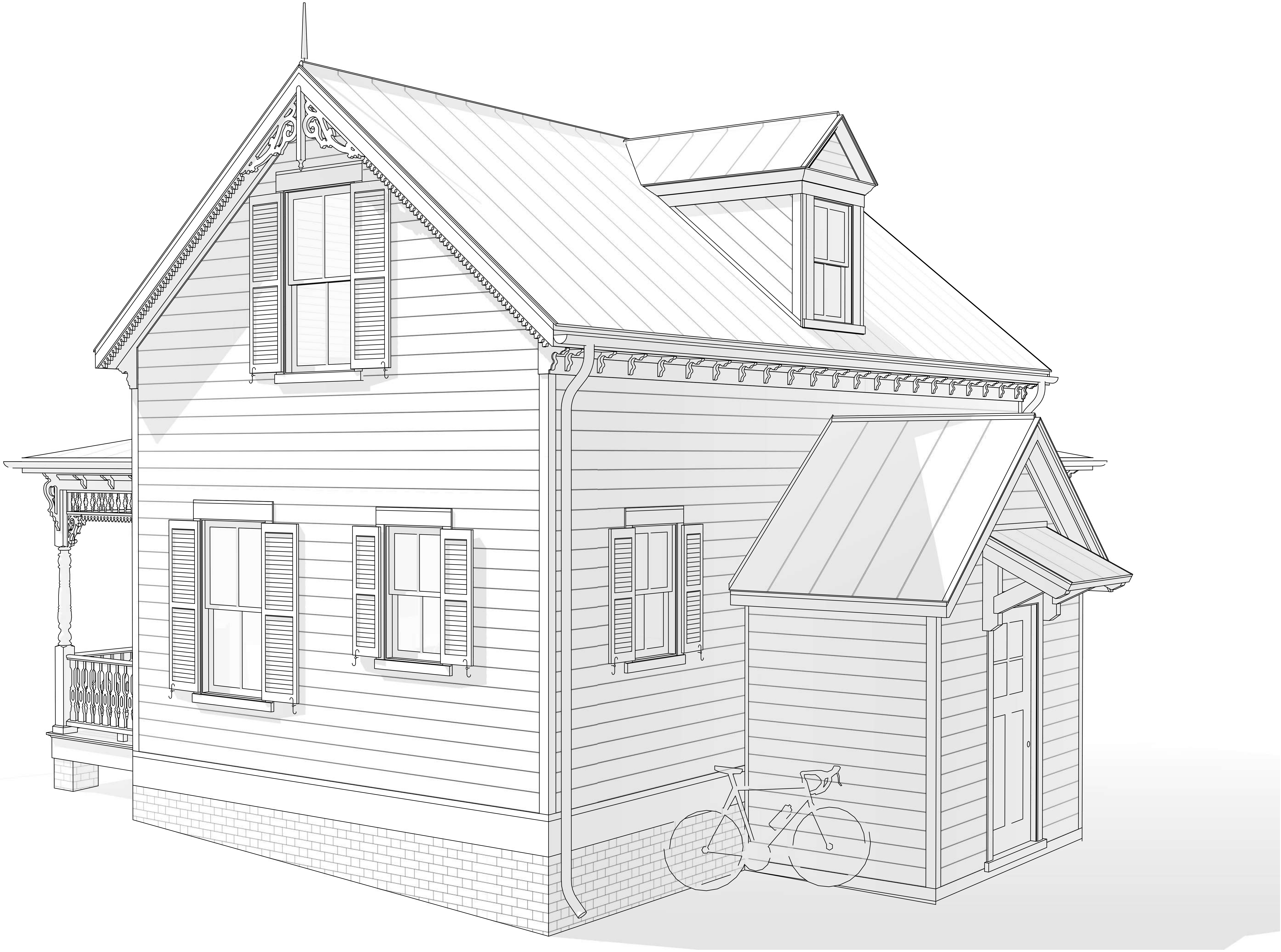
Like with most old houses, the back of the house is less formal than the front. Some of the ornament wraps around, but the house's rear is more utilitarian and flexible. This means that it's easier to add additions that are optimized for different functions. Here, a mud room is added to the rear, and an office is added to the side, at the wrap-around porch. These rooms could have other functions.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

BACK PERSPECTIVE 1

JAY OSBORNE

It's important that a house has a back. It needs a place for the trash bins . Also, a house needs to be able to grow and adapt— and the informal areas can easily have new additions appended to them. The symmetry is not so necessary, so it's possible to go a little crazy around the back. Add a lean-to with a larger office, or a pantry by the kitchen. The rear windows could instead be doors to new rooms.



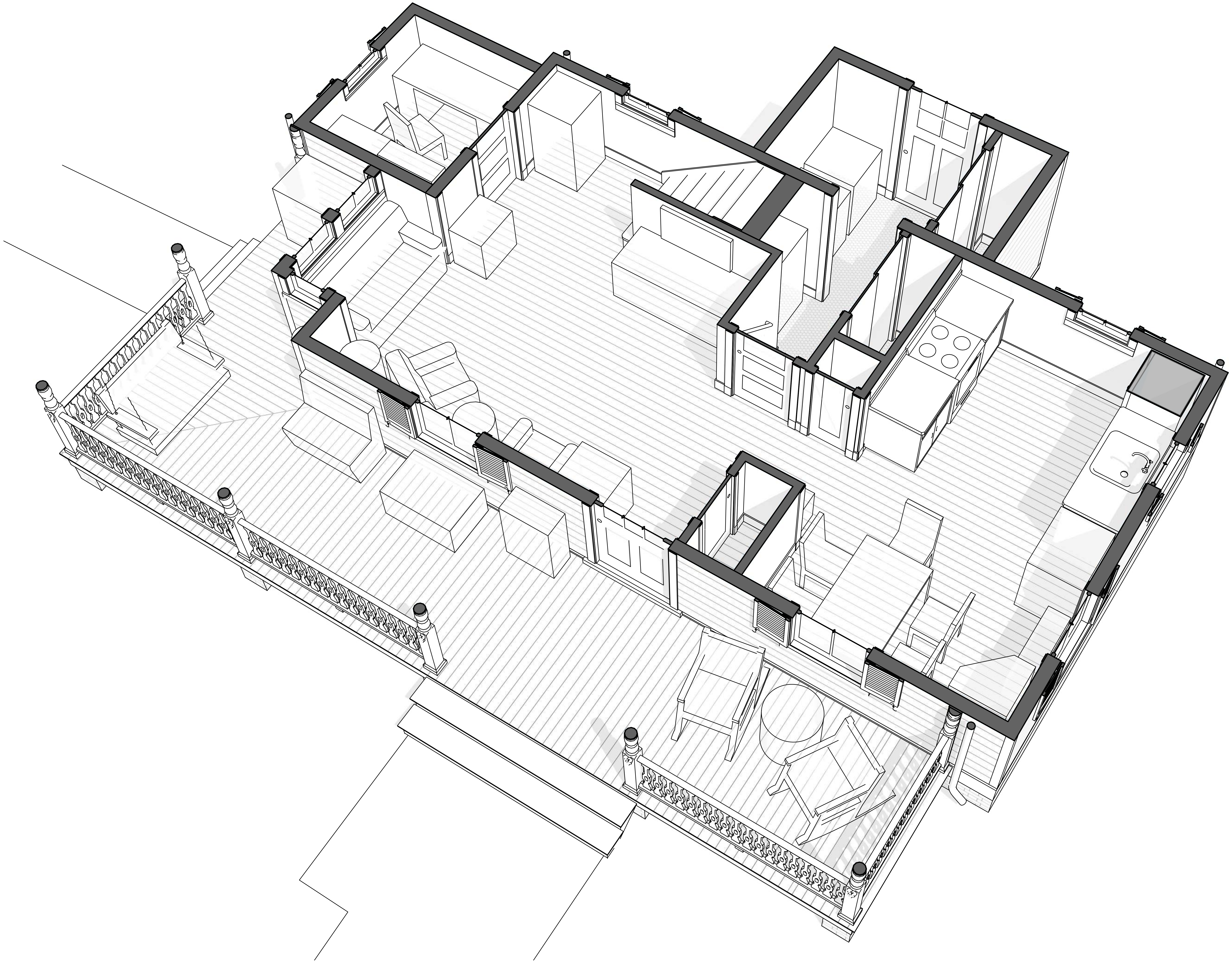
The bedroom windows on the second floor are about as small as they can be. To make them smaller, you'd have to use casement windows instead of traditional double hungs. The dormer on the upper level is necessary for maintaining 80 inches of head room at the staircase. The rear windows on the first level can be omitted. But the dormer window is necessary for daylighting and cross breezes.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

BACK PERSPECTIVE 2

JAY OSBORNE

Dormers are very common on old houses. They allow attics to have light and air—and since space was more valuable at a time when houses were small, dormers let houses to be much larger for relatively little cost. Today, dormers are usually decorative. And, ironically, quite horrible in their detailing. Modern builders have forgotten the craft, and now make their dormers look like glorified doghouses.



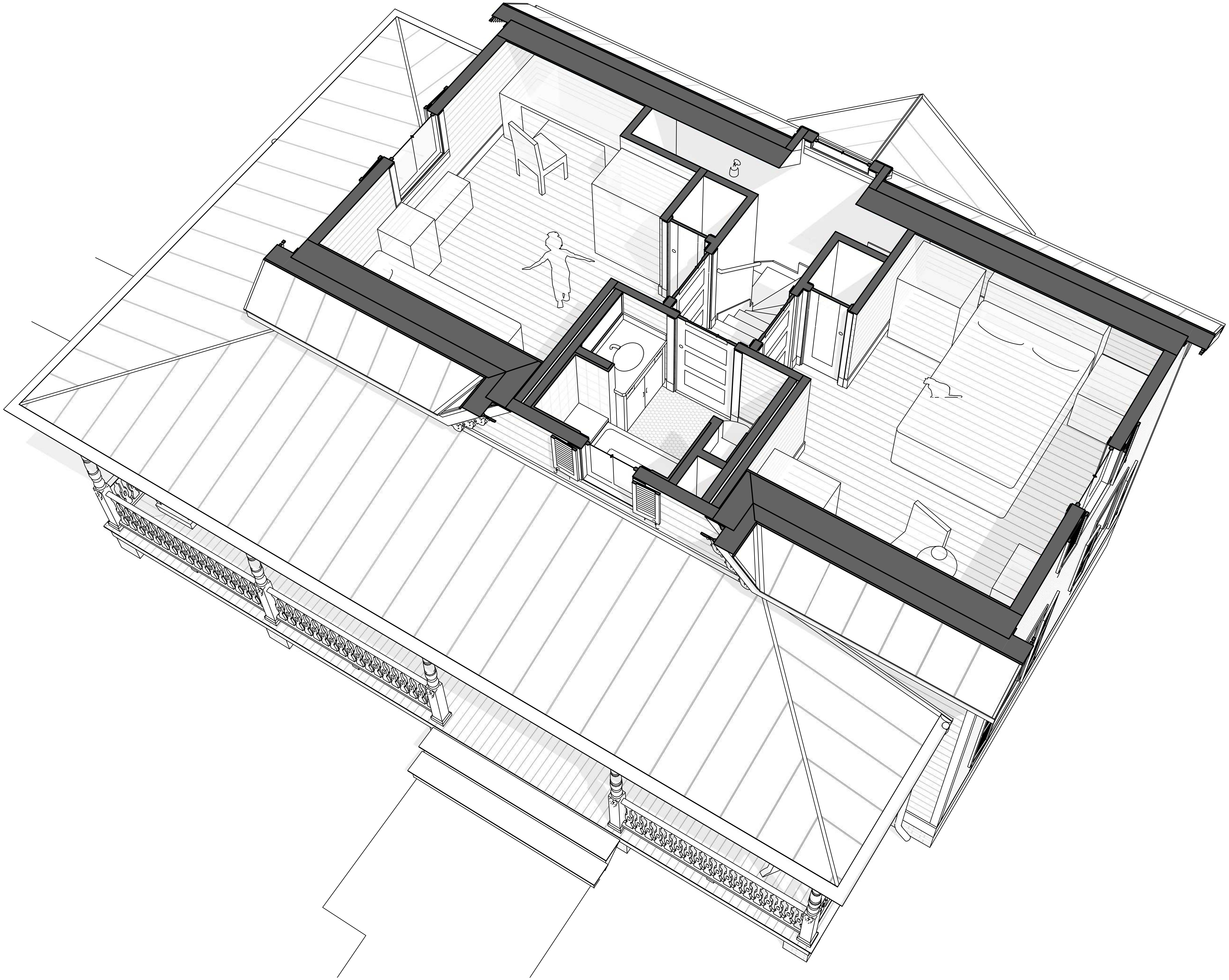
This variation of the Backyard Farmhouse has many additions that break out of the rectangular envelope of the primary massing. This is a better way to create additions. If you want more rooms in a house, don't inflate the rectangular envelope. That ruins the proportions of the house. It's better to create additions, which also visually support the main part of the building. It's also more flexible.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

FIRST FLOOR

JAY OSBORNE

The mud room could be part of a hyphen that connects the house to a garage. Garages tend to be massive compared to rest of a house, they might dominate the massing, or block the sunlight and breezes. A hyphen prevents this. As a hyphen, the mud room could also connect to a large office or studio. The mud room contains laundry units and two closets for separating coats and utilities.



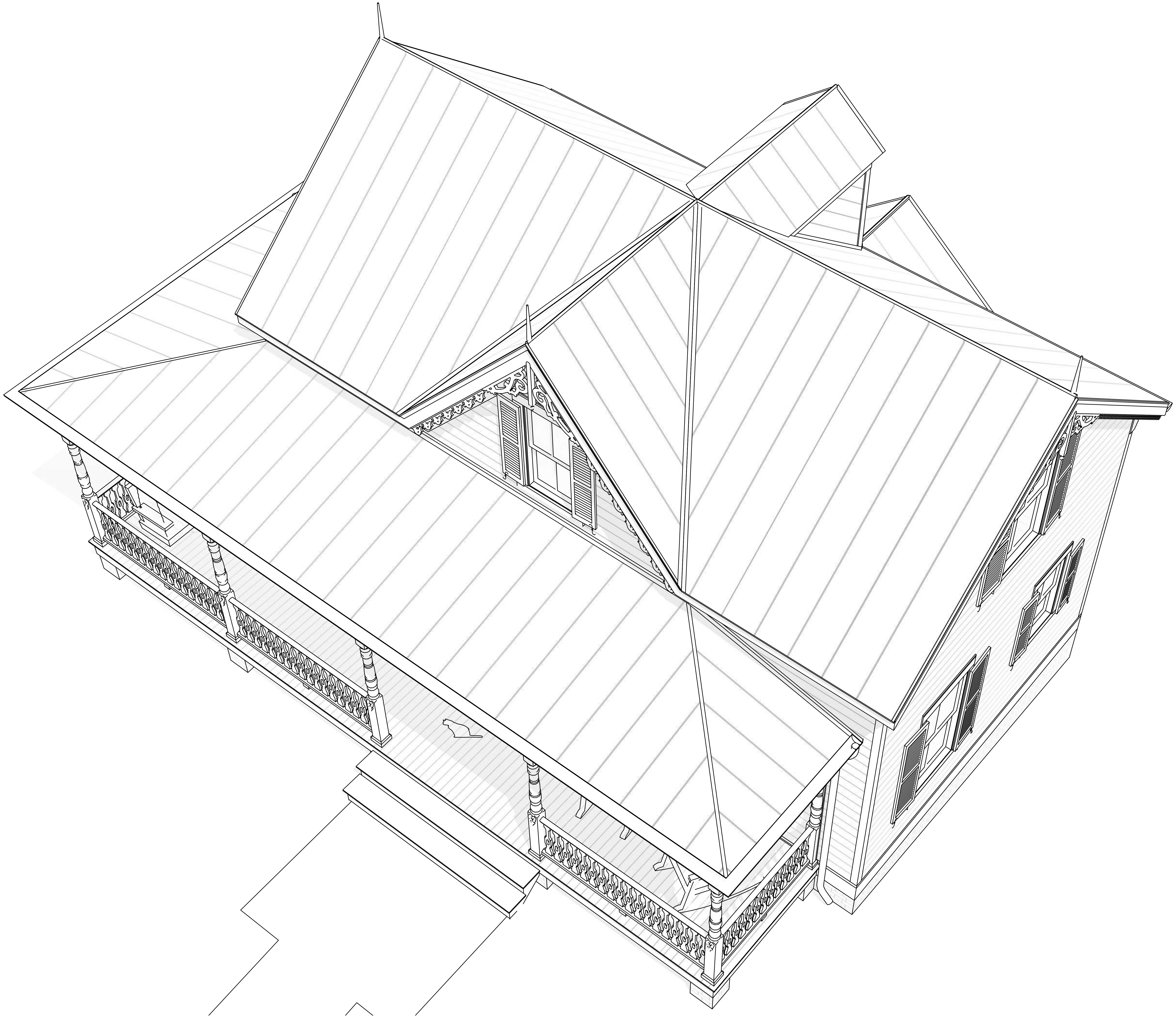
The upper floor in this version of the Backyard Farmhouse will be almost identical to all the others. The rooms are of a medium size, since this version has a 16x28 primary massing (compared to 16x24 and 16x32 versions). So the bedroom are about 100 square feet each, which is about ideal for a room that's primarily for sleeping and relaxing. One bedroom could be an office instead.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

SECOND FLOOR

JAY OSBORNE

The bathroom is very rigid in its arrangement because the ceilings are so low. In fact, it's almost impossible to move around the fixtures without either violating code, or lifting the ceiling by a couple of feet. So it's an interesting optimization—the volume of the bathroom is about as small as it can be, even though the floor area could be reduced in a design that had more conventional ceiling heights.



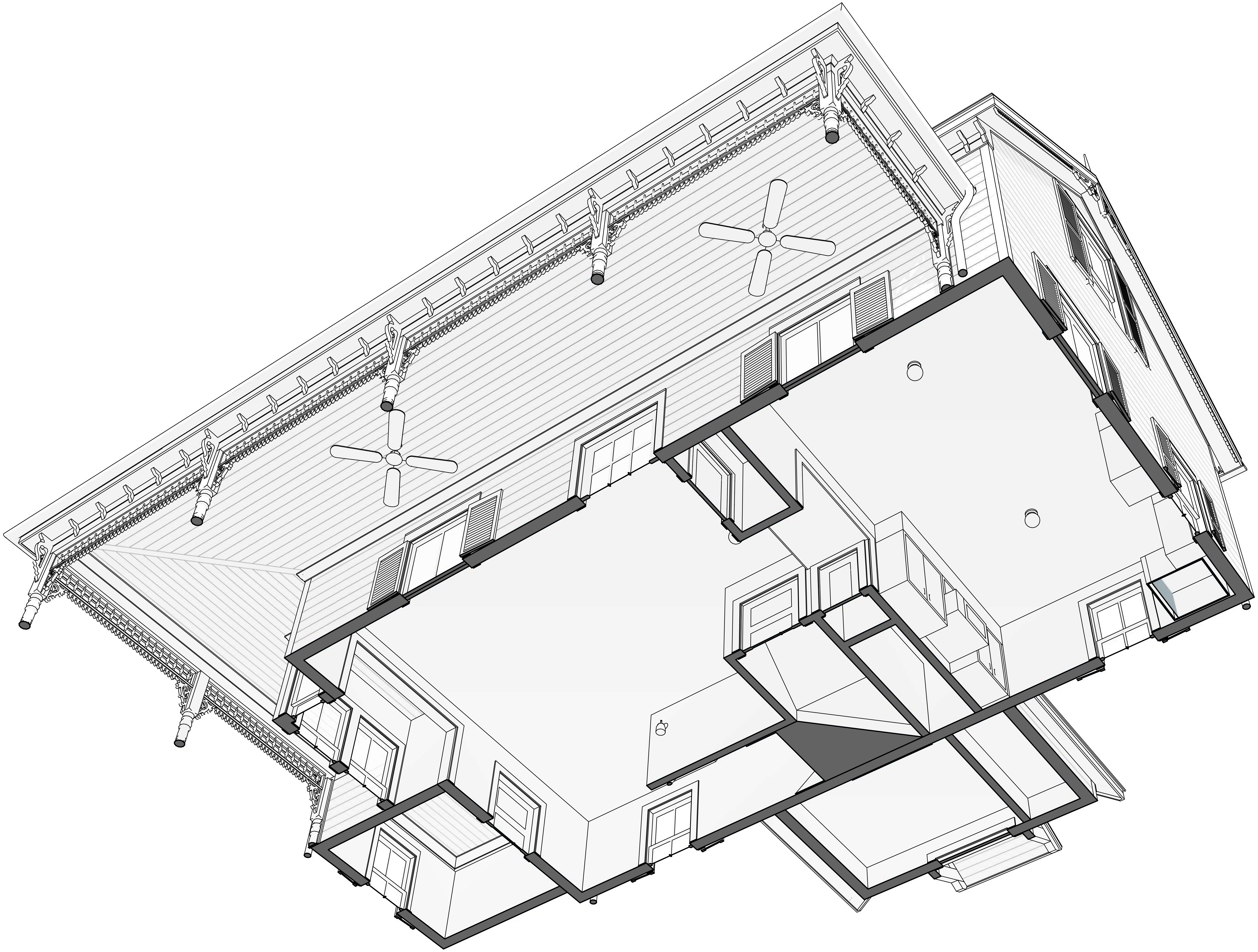
The Backyard Farmhouse is all about the roof. Almost every decision comes back to the intention to keep the house short, to fit within strict height limits. Many of those height limits were made by people who didn't do the math, or were intentionally trying to obstruct new development in their neighborhood. Though it's important to follow local zoning laws, remember that they're not about safety.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

THE ROOF

JAY OSBORNE

Ninety percent of zoning ordinances are arbitrary and unnecessary. Unlike building codes, which are usually predicated around safety, zoning ordinances only affect designated land use— like the amount of square footage you can build on a particular piece of land. Zoning is usually made up by people with no imagination, and a vested financial interest in blocking any new development.



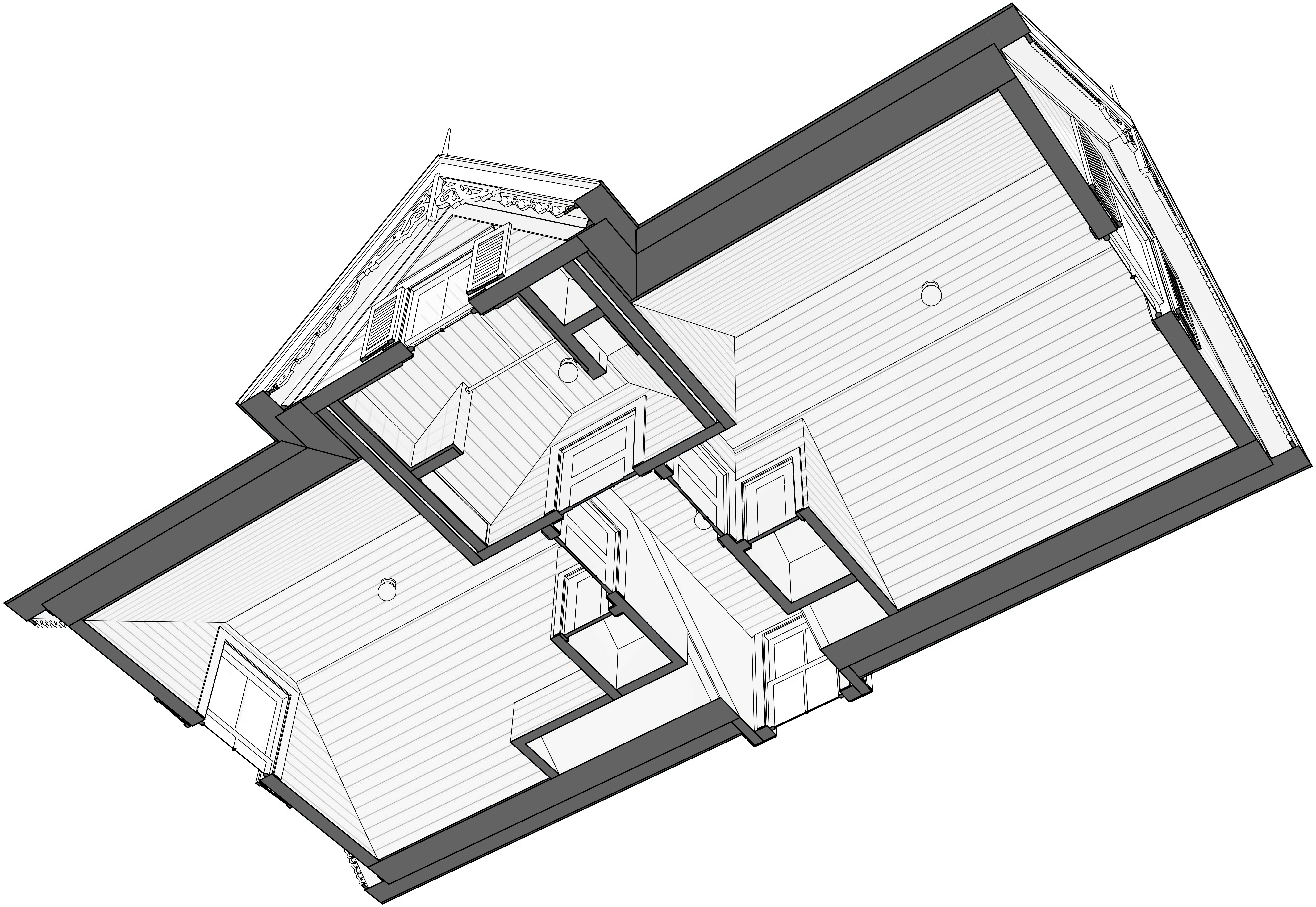
I may not be able to include these worm's eye views in my book containing the Backyard Farmhouse designs. Because I'll be packing four designs into one book, I need to be relatively concise in the way that I show the plans. The pages will need to be more dense with information. That's a shame because there's much to see in one of these inverted ceiling plans. Just like in the floor plans.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

DOWNSTAIRS CEILING

JAY OSBORNE

Usually, porches are oriented to the south and west (in the US). The particular circumstances of a site might make it better to mirror the design, or modify the mud room to be the main entrance. That side of the house isn't as pretty, but it could still have a storybook cottage appearance. And it's possible to do wonders by planting trees and shrubs by the house. Pick the front that works best for you.



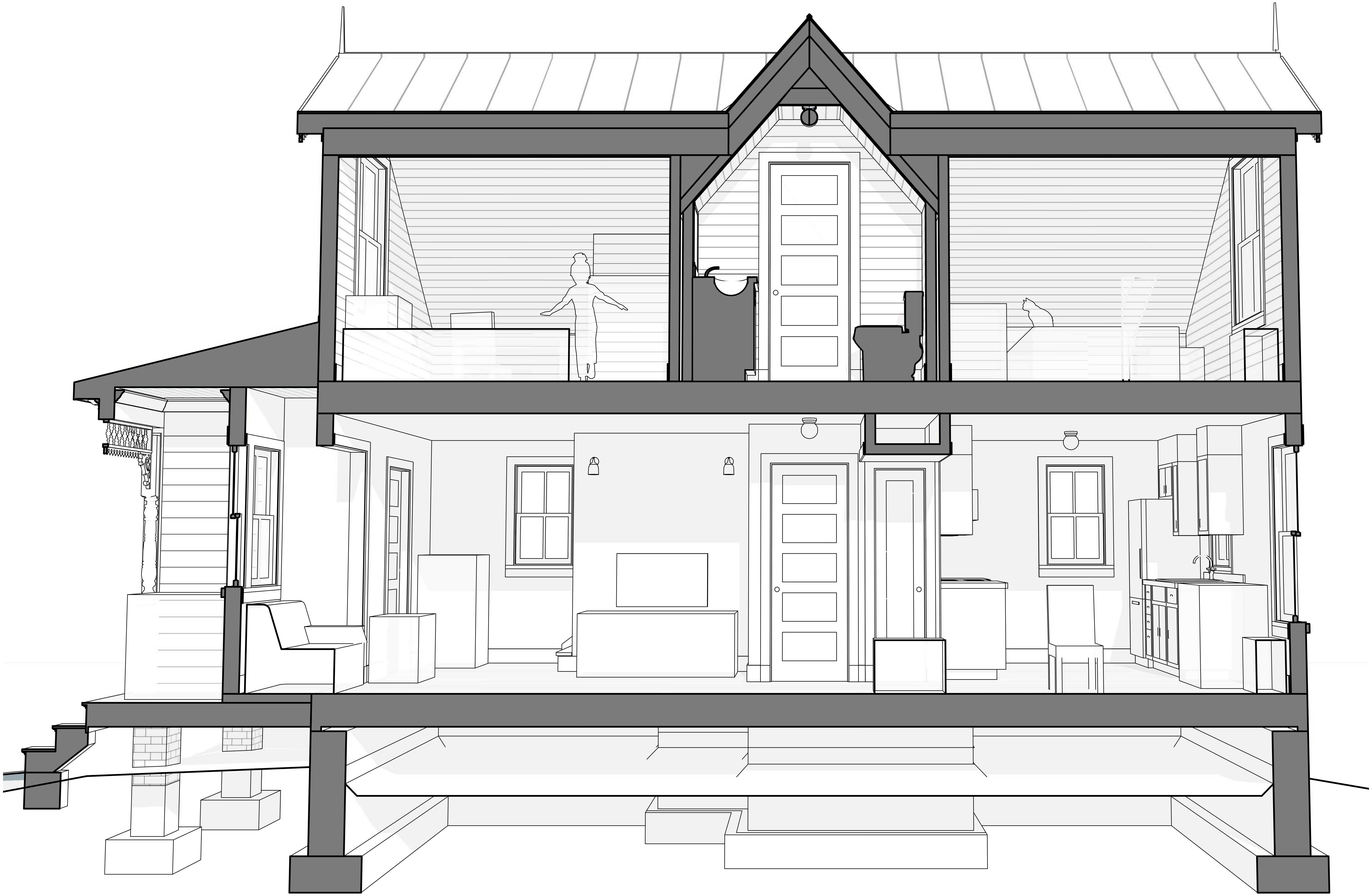
The bedrooms have low ceilings. So low that you would probably put furniture against the walls. The overall feeling of these rooms will be like being in a tent. Instead of fabric, wooden beadboard panels provide a more tactile materiality to the walls and ceiling, making them more warm to the touch than conventional gypsum wallboard. These cozy upstairs rooms will fit your lifestyle like a glove.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

UPSTAIRS CEILING

JAY OSBORNE

Don't try to lower these ceilings. You will quickly cause headaches and a whole suite of code violations. However, if you raised the ceilings of the upstairs rooms by a foot, they would be significantly more spacious, and much more flexible. Remember: this will also increase the square footage and might hit a building height limit. Don't lift the ceilings by more than 2 feet, because it won't feel cozy



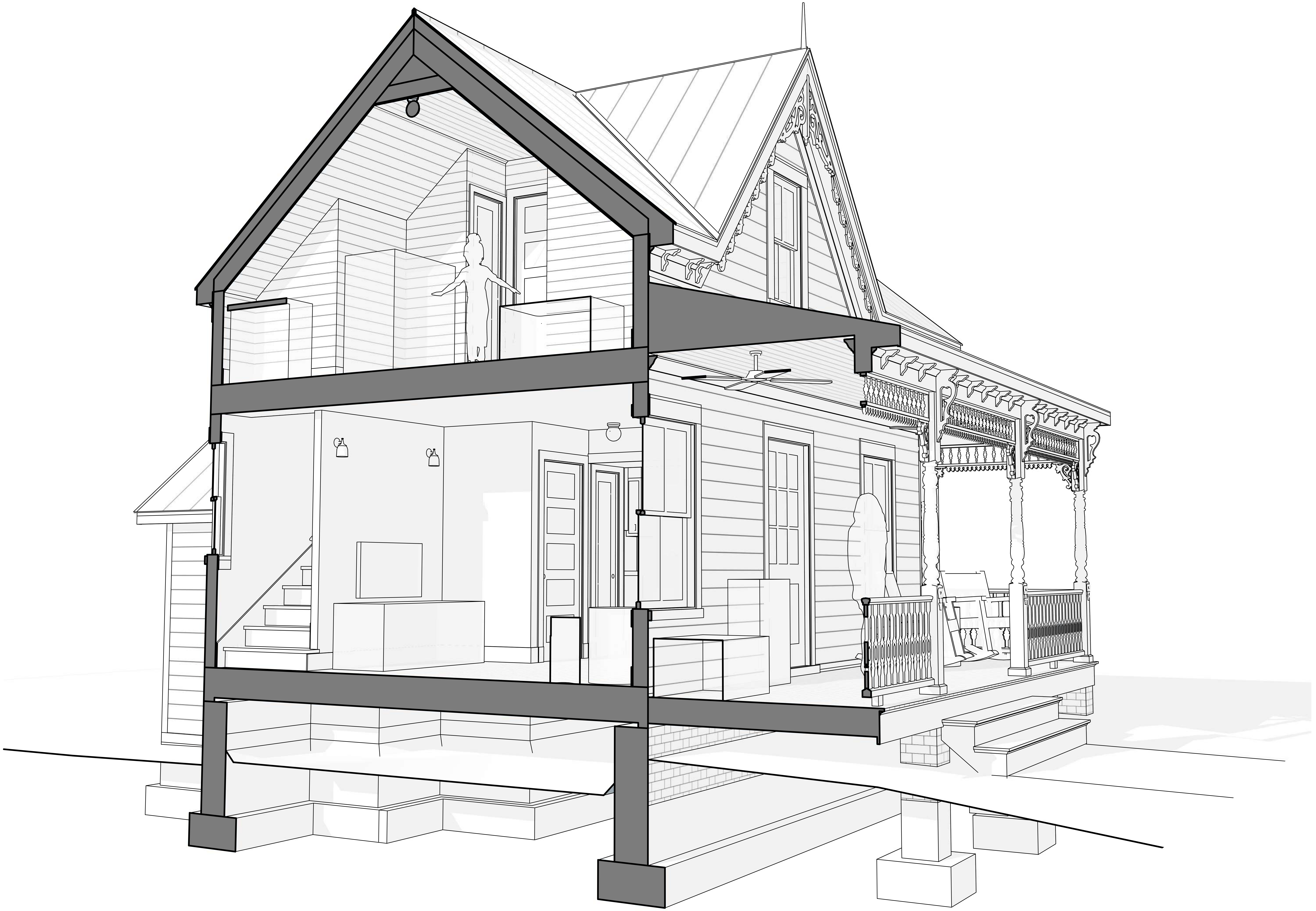
Crawlspace foundations aren't the cheapest, easiest, most spacious, or most functional option. Basements, slabs, and pier foundations often are better. However, crawlspaces are pretty good at everything. Sometimes it's better not to optimize. Adaptation is easier when there's no optimization. Crawlspaces are the most versatile and adaptable foundation option. That's why they're so common.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

LONG SECTION

JAY OSBORNE

With a crawlspace, it's possible to imagine this as a modular house. If constructed offsite in a factory, a couple of pieces can be shipped down a highway and then hoisted into place using a crane. Thinking another way, crawlspaces can contain utilities, like an air handling unit (very useful for a small house). And a crawlspace can later be renovated and converted into a basement.



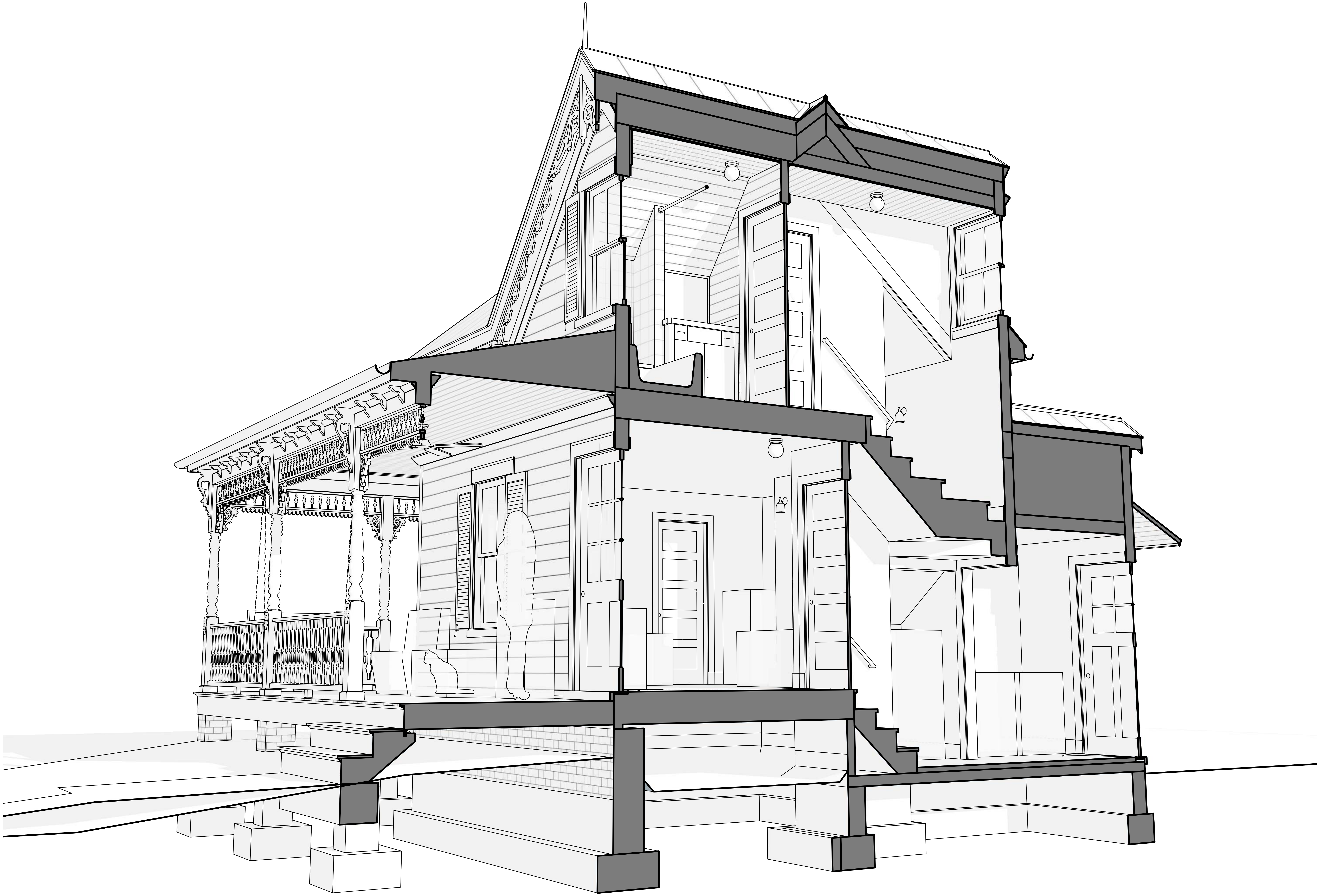
This version of the Backyard Farmhouse works with a 2 foot higher height limit that some of the other versions. So it adds six inches of head room to the first floor. An eight foot ceiling solves some problems. Also, the porch posts are more appropriately proportioned. As a rule of thumb, the space between the posts should be roughly square or vertical, so they shouldn't be more than 8 feet apart.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

TRANSVERSE SECTION 1

JAY OSBORNE

The gingerbread ornament actually has some subtle functions. Not only do the brackets visually reinforce the structure, they also literally do so. The lacy spandrel at the porch beam filters the daylight, softening the shadows, and reducing glare caused by high contrast. Rounded posts are better for admitting daylight, and are less visually obtrusive than square posts. Form fulfills function.



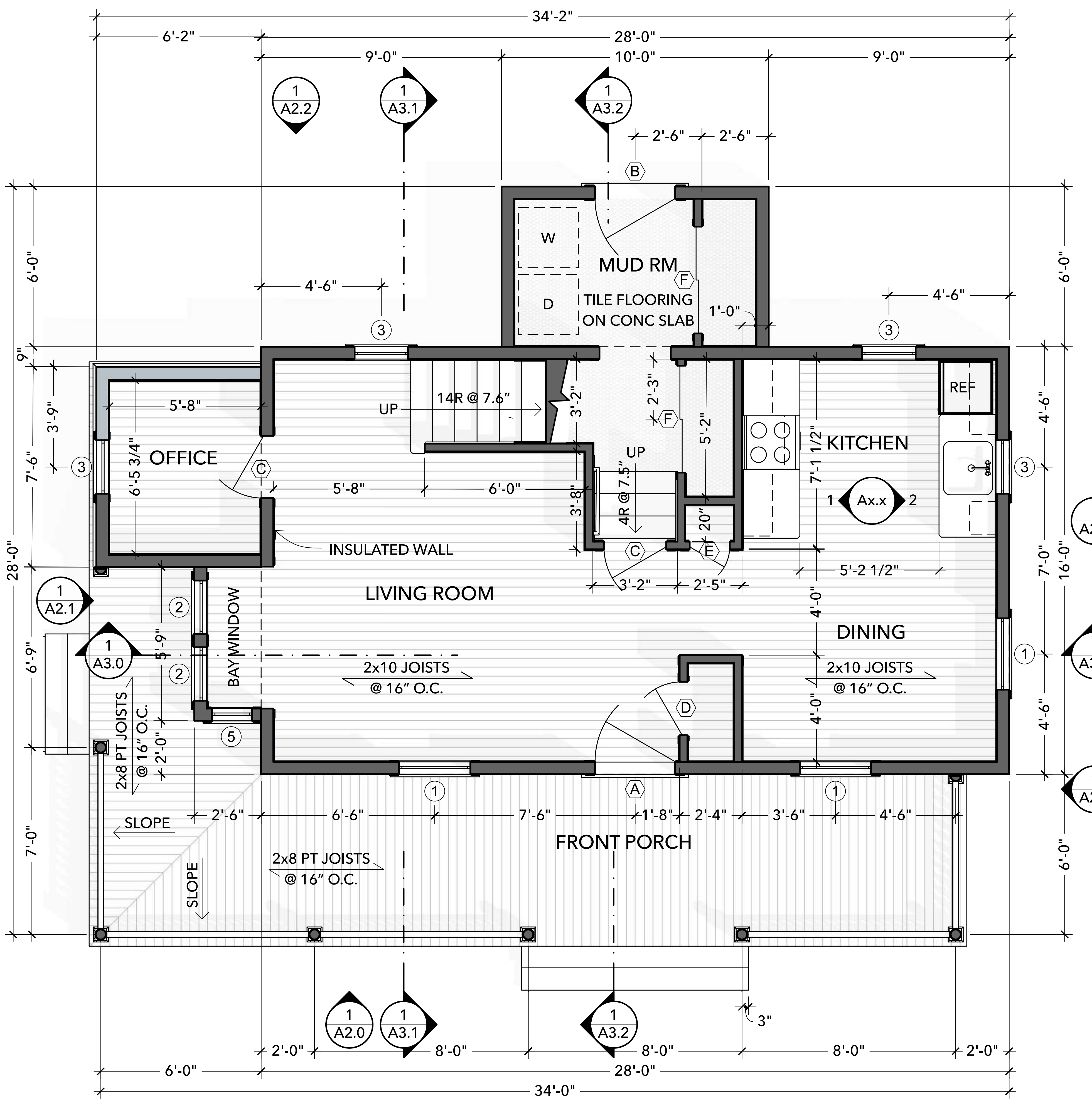
The winder stairs are constructed as a series of staggered platforms, with gypsum wallboard below (the utility room's ceiling must be fire resistant). The stairs need 80 inches of clear height, and that affects many decisions regarding their design. If you try to make changes, be sure to give yourself time to deal with all of the unintended side effects. Small houses are not as easy to adapt.

MAY'S BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

TRANSVERSE SECTION 2

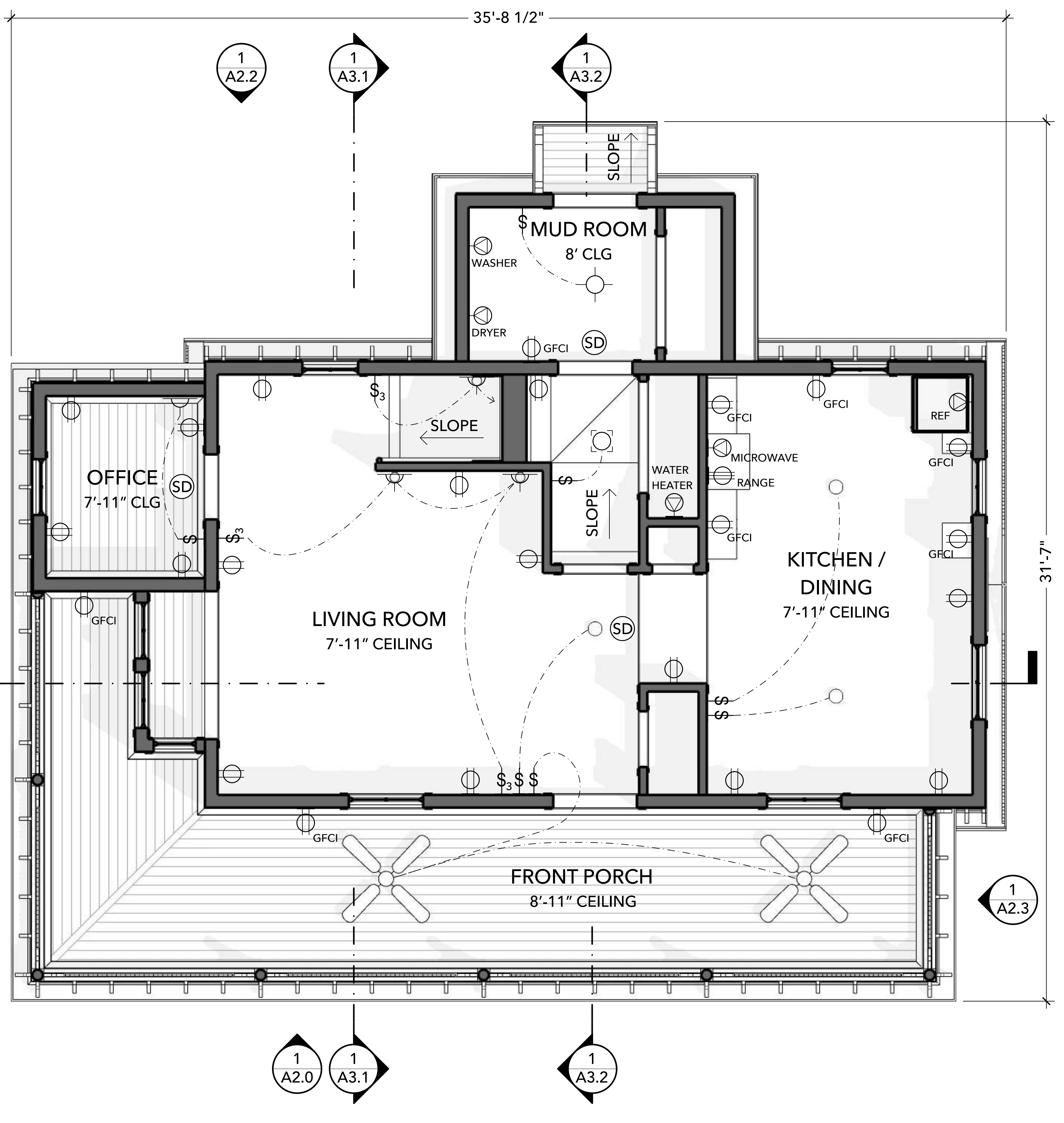
JAY OSBORNE

This version of the Backyard Farmhouse has a mud room with a slab foundation, turning that space under the stairs into a fully-functional utility room. By placing the laundry machines on a slab foundation, the noise and vibrations are muffled and contained. The conditioned crawlspace can be accessed through this room. If the mud room were the front entry, the laundry machines could go in a closet.



① DOWNSTAIRS FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



② DOWNSTAIRS CEILING & ELECTRICAL PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

FLOOR PLAN NOTES:

1. SEE APPLICABLE CODES FOR WINDER STAIRS.

2. BY CODE, A MINIMUM 30x30 INCH AREA OF THE BATHTUB MUST HAVE MORE THAN 80" OF HEAD CLEARANCE.

3.

DOORS

Ⓐ 36x84 9-LITE (FRONT DOOR)
Ⓑ 36x84 4-LITE (BACK DOOR)
Ⓒ 28x80 5-PANEL INT DOOR
Ⓓ 24x80 1-PANEL INT DOOR
Ⓔ 18x80 LOUVERED INT DOOR
Ⓕ 24X80 DOUBLE SLIDING DOORS

WINDOWS

① 32x60 DH WINDOW 2/2 DIVIDED LITES
② 24x48 DH WINDOW 2/2 DIVIDED LITES
③ 24x42 DH WINDOW 2/2 DIVIDED LITES
④ 28x44 DH WINDOW 2/2 (DORMER)
⑤ 18x48 DH WINDOW 1/1 (BAY SIDE)

KEYNOTES

1. HARDWOOD FLOORING
2. T&G WOOD DECKING
3. GYPSUM WALLBOARD
4. BEADBOARD PANELLING
5. TURNED PORCH POST
6. PORCH RAILING
7. PILASTER (TO MATCH POSTS)
8. PORCH BEAM
SOFFIT
9. BED MOLDING
10. CROWN MOLDING
10. CORNICE BRACKETS
12. CHAMFER (80" HEAD CLEAR)
13 CEILING FAN

REFLECTED CEILING PLAN & ELECTRICAL NOTES

1. CEILING HEIGHTS ARE APPROXIMATE (+/- 1"). SEE SECTIONS FOR EXACT HEIGHTS.

2. CENTER THE ELECTRICAL FIXTURES ON SURFACES, AND WITH PRIMARY DESIGN ELEMENTS.

4. CEILING AT MUD/ UTIILITY ROOM SHALL BE FIRE-RATED USING GYP BD SHEATHING

---

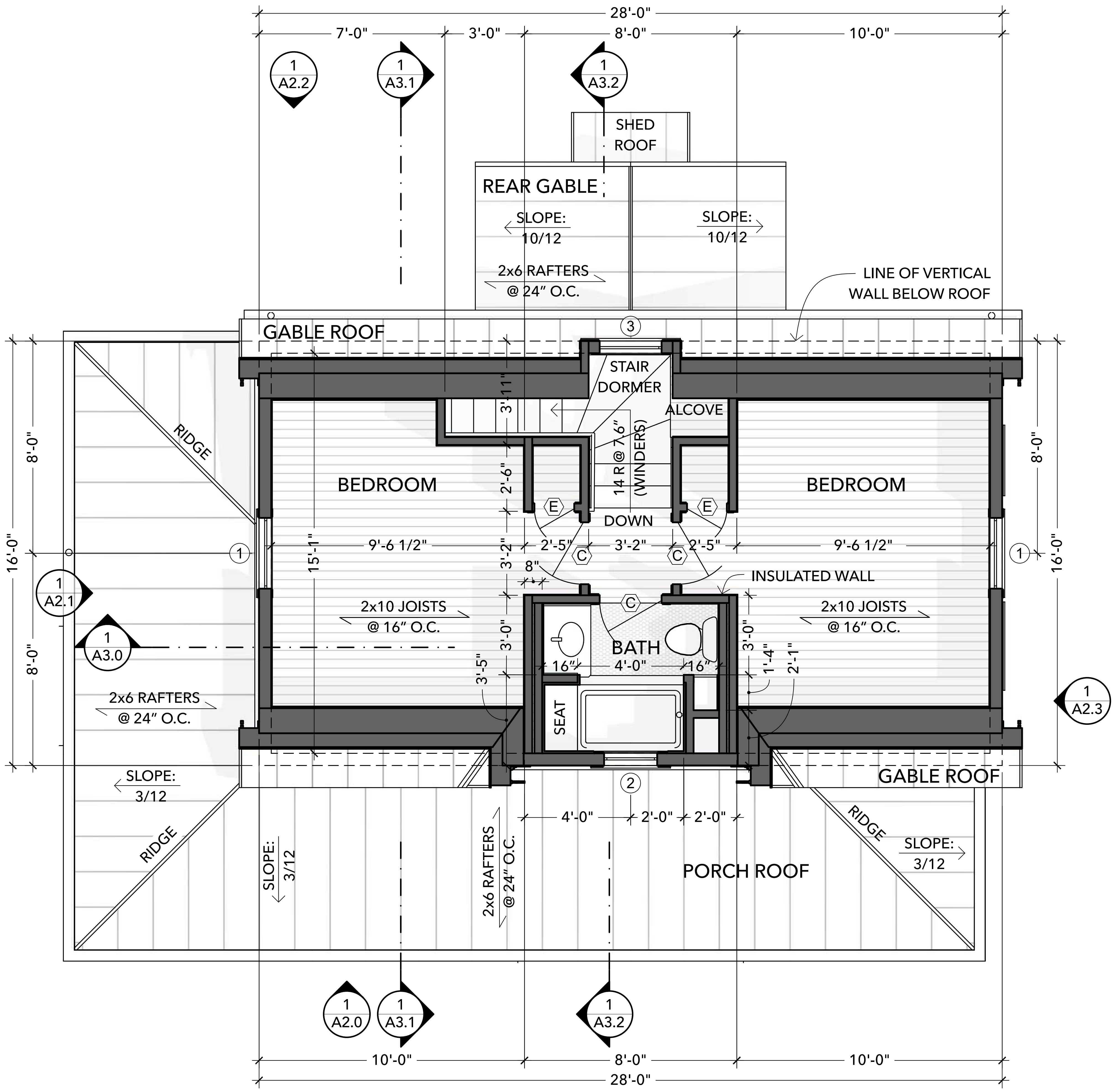
attribution (cc) share-alike

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS
You are encouraged to share, copy, and customize this work. These drawings are generously made available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike License. Some rights reserved.

A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE
BACKYARD FARMHOUSE
MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

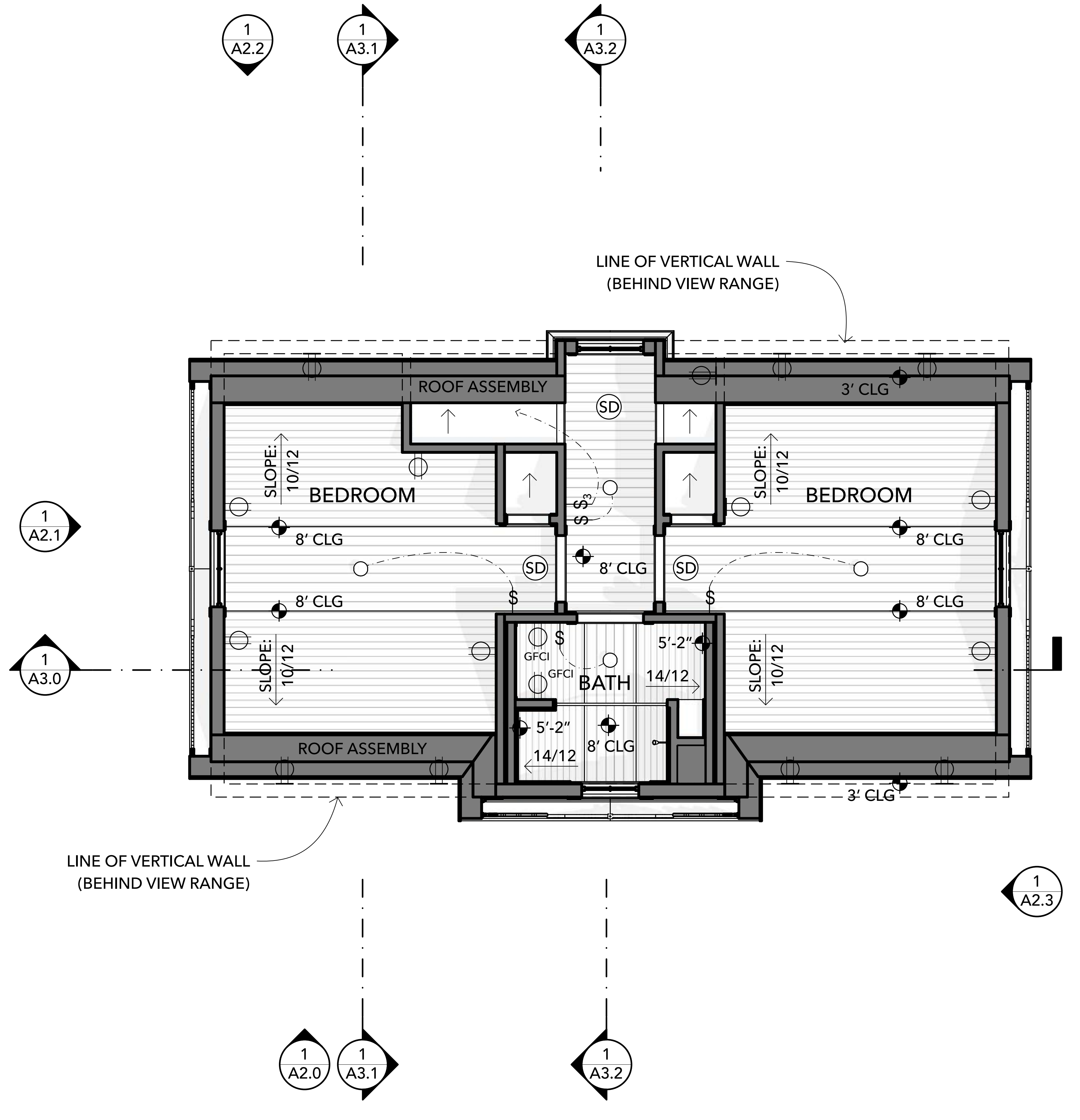
5	2023-05-30	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	2023-04-30	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	2023-03-31	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	2023-02-28	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	2023-11-30	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

DOWNSTAIRS PLANS
VERSION: MAY
A1.1



1 UPSTAIRS FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 UPSTAIRS CEILING & ELECTRICAL PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

FLOOR PLAN NOTES

1. SEE APPLICABLE CODES FOR WINDER STAIRS.

2. ANY AREA OF ROOM WITH LESS THAN A 5' CEILING DOES NOT QUALIFY AS SQUARE FOOTAGE, AND SHALL NOT BE INCLUDED IN TOTAL FLOOR AREA, OR ROOM AREA.

3. AT LEAST 50% OF ROOM AREA (SEE NOTE ABOVE) MUST HAVE A 7' MIN CEILING.

DOORS

- A 36x84 9-LITE (FRONT DOOR)
- B 36x84 4-LITE (BACK DOOR)
- C 28x80 5-PANEL INT DOOR
- D 24x80 1-PANEL INT DOOR
- E 18x80 LOUVERED INT DOOR
- F 24X80 DOUBLE SLIDING DOORS

WINDOWS

- ① 32x60 DH WINDOW 2/2 DIVIDED LITES
- ② 24x48 DH WINDOW 2/2 DIVIDED LITES
- ③ 24x42 DH WINDOW 2/2 DIVIDED LITES
- ④ 28x44 DH WINDOW 2/2 (DORMER)
- ⑤ 18x48 DH WINDOW 1/1 (BAY SIDE)

KEYNOTES

1. HARDWOOD FLOORING
2. T&G WOOD DECKING
3. GYPSUM WALLBOARD
4. BEADBOARD PANELLING
5. TURNED PORCH POST
6. PORCH RAILING
7. PILASTER (TO MATCH POSTS)
8. PORCH BEAM
SOFFIT
9. BED MOLDING
10. CROWN MOLDING
10. CORNICE BRACKETS
12. CHAMFER (80" HEAD CLEAR)
13 CEILING FAN

REFLECTED CEILING PLAN & ELECTRICAL NOTES

1. CEILING HEIGHTS ARE APPROXIMATE (+/- 1")

2. CENTER THE ELECTRICAL FIXTURES ON SURFACES AND/OR WITH GEOMETRIC AXES.

3. A MIN 30x30-INCH AREA OF THE SHOWER MUST HAVE A CEILING HEIGHT OF OVER 6'-8".

4. BY CODE, THE BACK OF THE LAVATORY AND TOILET CAN HAVE A 5' CEILING, BUT THE CEILING NEEDS TO BE AT LEAST 6'-8" AT THE FRONT OF THESE FIXTURES.

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

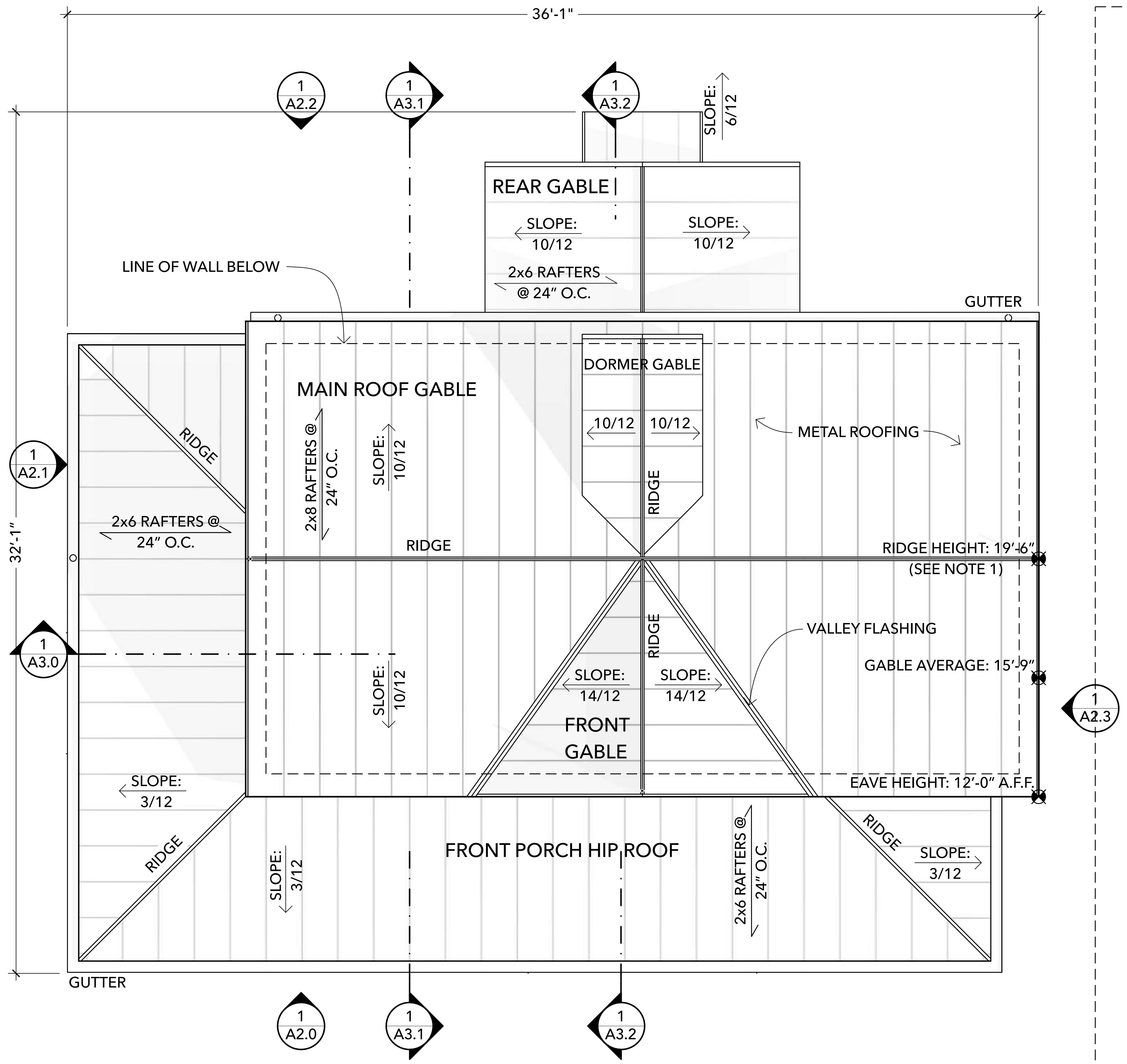
A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

5	2023-05-30	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	2023-04-30	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	2023-03-31	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	2023-02-28	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	2023-11-30	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

UPSTAIRS PLANS
VERSION: MAY
A1.2



[FUTURE FOUNDATION PLAN]

① ROOF PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

② FOUNDATION PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

ROOF PLAN NOTES

1. DATUMS ARE TO FINISH FLOOR. BUILDING HEIGHTS ARE OFTEN MEASURED TO GRADE. FOR A CRAWLSPACE OR BASEMENT, ADD 2 FEET MINIMUM TO THE GROUND LEVEL. THEREFORE, THIS DESIGN WORKS WITH AN 18 FOOT HEIGHT RESTRICTION (GABLE AVERAGE) OR A 22 FOOT HEIGHT RESTRICTION (ROOF RIDGE TO GRADE).

2. DORMER AND GABLE END CONSTRUCTION DETAILS TO BE PRESENTED LATER.

KEYNOTES

1. HARDWOOD FLOORING
2. T&G WOOD DECKING
3. GYPSUM WALLBOARD
4. BEADBOARD PANELLING
5. TURNED PORCH POST
6. PORCH RAILING
7. PILASTER (TO MATCH POSTS)
8. PORCH BEAM
SOFFIT
9. BED MOLDING
10. CROWN MOLDING
10. CORNICE BRACKETS
12. CHAMFER (80" HEAD CLEAR)
13 CEILING FAN

FOUNDATION PLAN NOTES

1. CEILING HEIGHTS ARE APPROXIMATE (+/- 1"). SEE SECTIONS FOR EXACT HEIGHTS.

2. CENTER THE ELECTRICAL FIXTURES ON SURFACES, AND WITH PRIMARY DESIGN ELEMENTS.

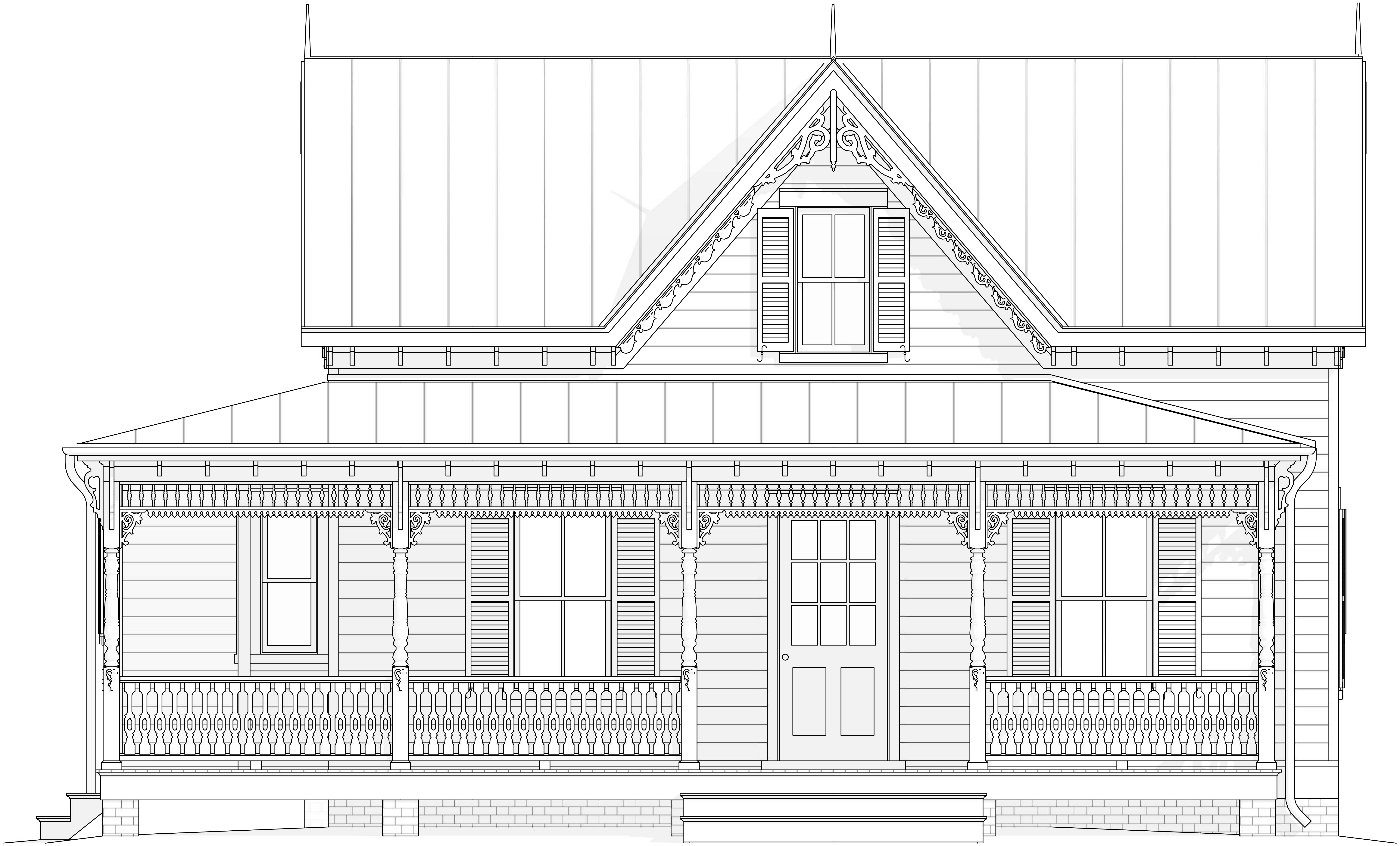
4. UTILITY ROOM CEILING SHALL BE FIRE-RATED USING GYPSUM WALLBOARD SHEATHING

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS
You are encouraged to share, copy, and customize this work. These drawings are generously made available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike License. Some rights reserved.

A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE
BACKYARD FARMHOUSE
MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

5	**2023-05-30**	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	**2023-04-30**	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	**2023-03-31**	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	**2023-02-28**	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	**2023-11-30**	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

ROOF/FOUNDATION
VERSION: MAY
A1.3



① SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

attribution cc share-alike

You are encouraged to share, copy, and customize this work. These drawings are generously made available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike License. Some rights reserved.

A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

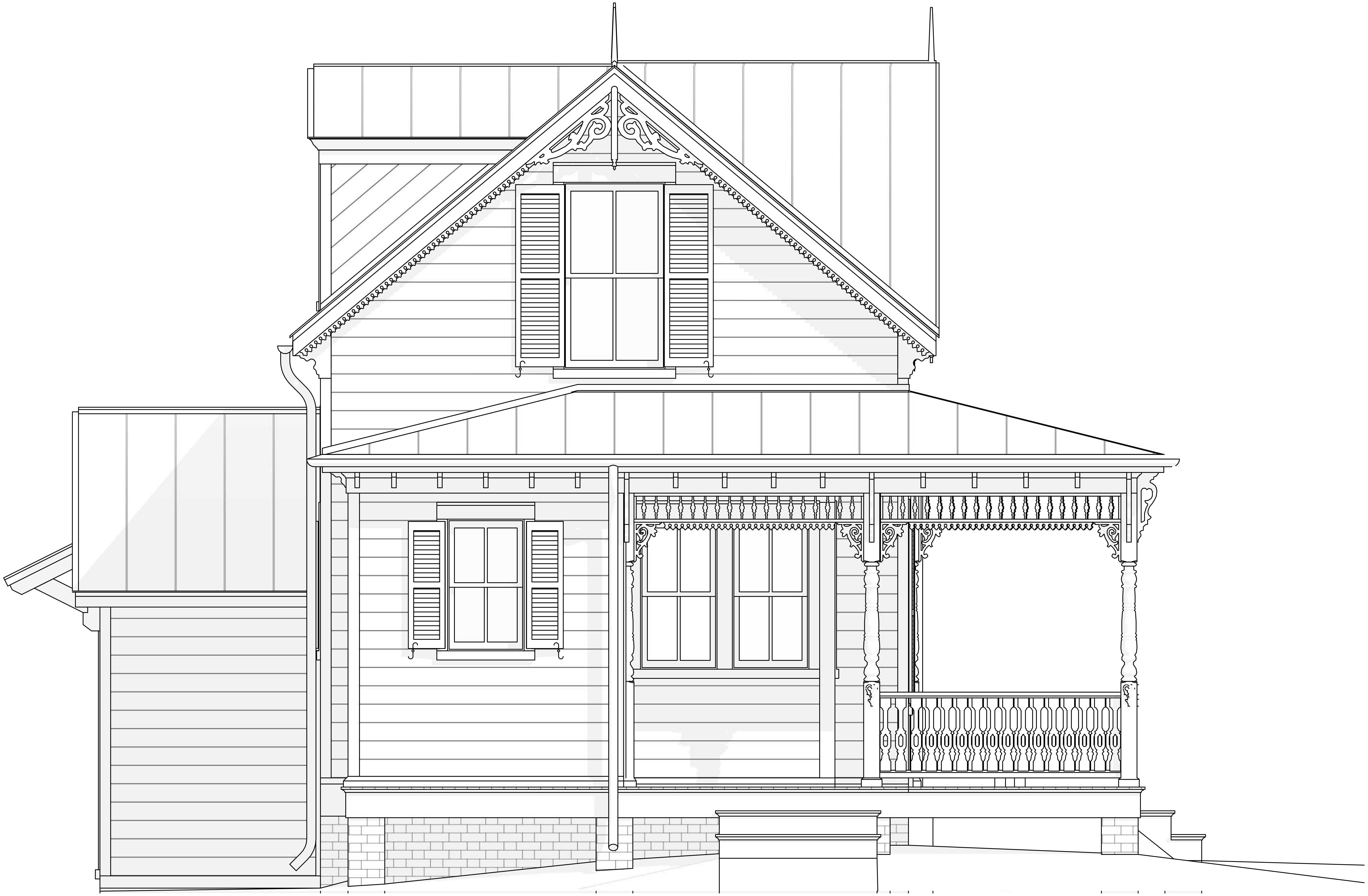
BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

5	**2023-05-30**	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	**2023-04-30**	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	**2023-03-31**	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	**2023-02-28**	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	**2023-11-30**	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

FRONT ELEVATION

A2.0



① WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

attribution
cc
share-alike

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS
You are encouraged to share, copy, and customize this work. These drawings are generously made available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike License. Some rights reserved.

A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

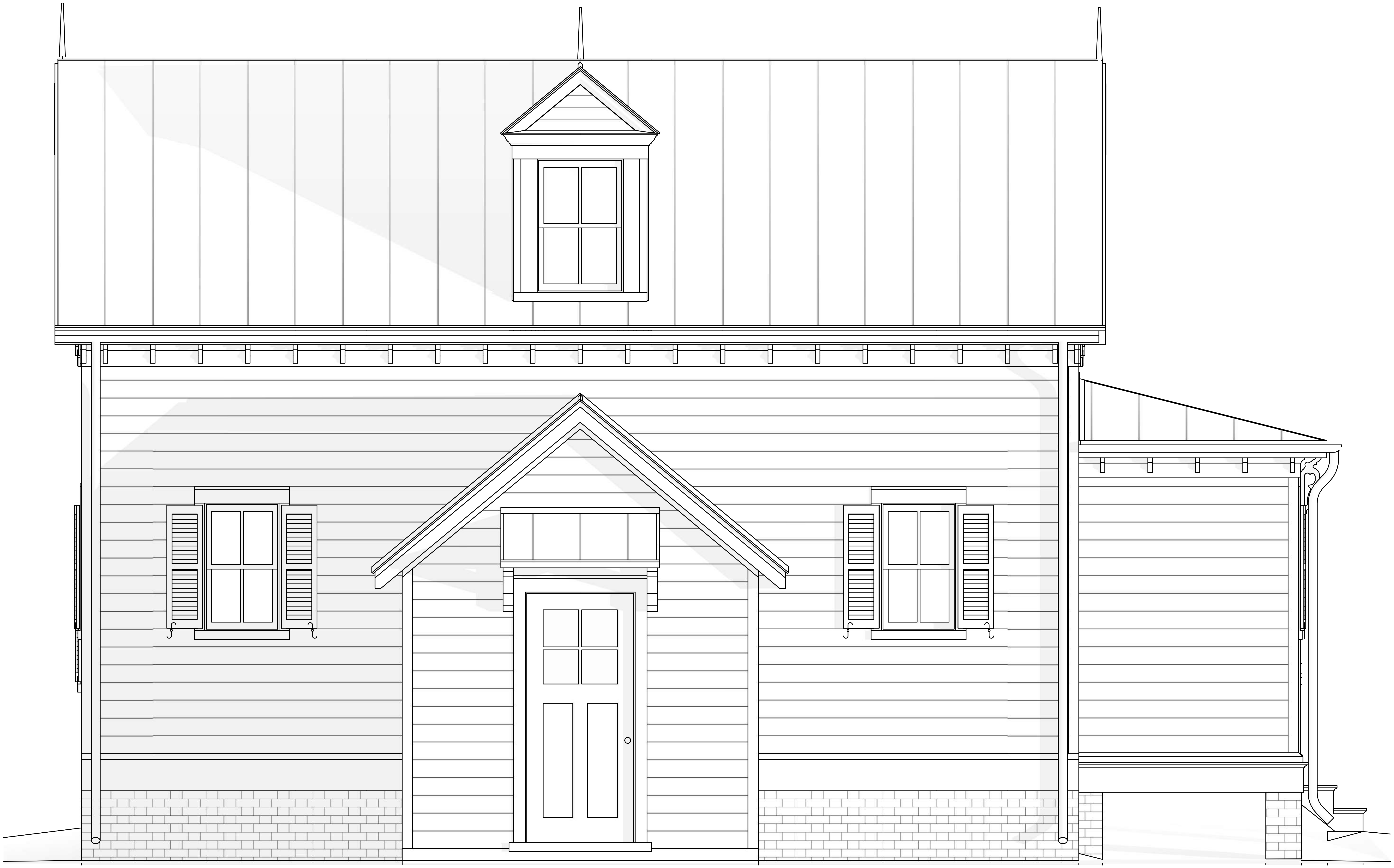
BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

5	**2023-05-30**	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	**2023-04-30**	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	**2023-03-31**	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	**2023-02-28**	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	**2023-11-30**	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

WEST ELEVATION

A2.1



① NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

attribution cc share-alike

You are encouraged to share, copy, and customize this work. These drawings are generously made available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike License. Some rights reserved.

A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

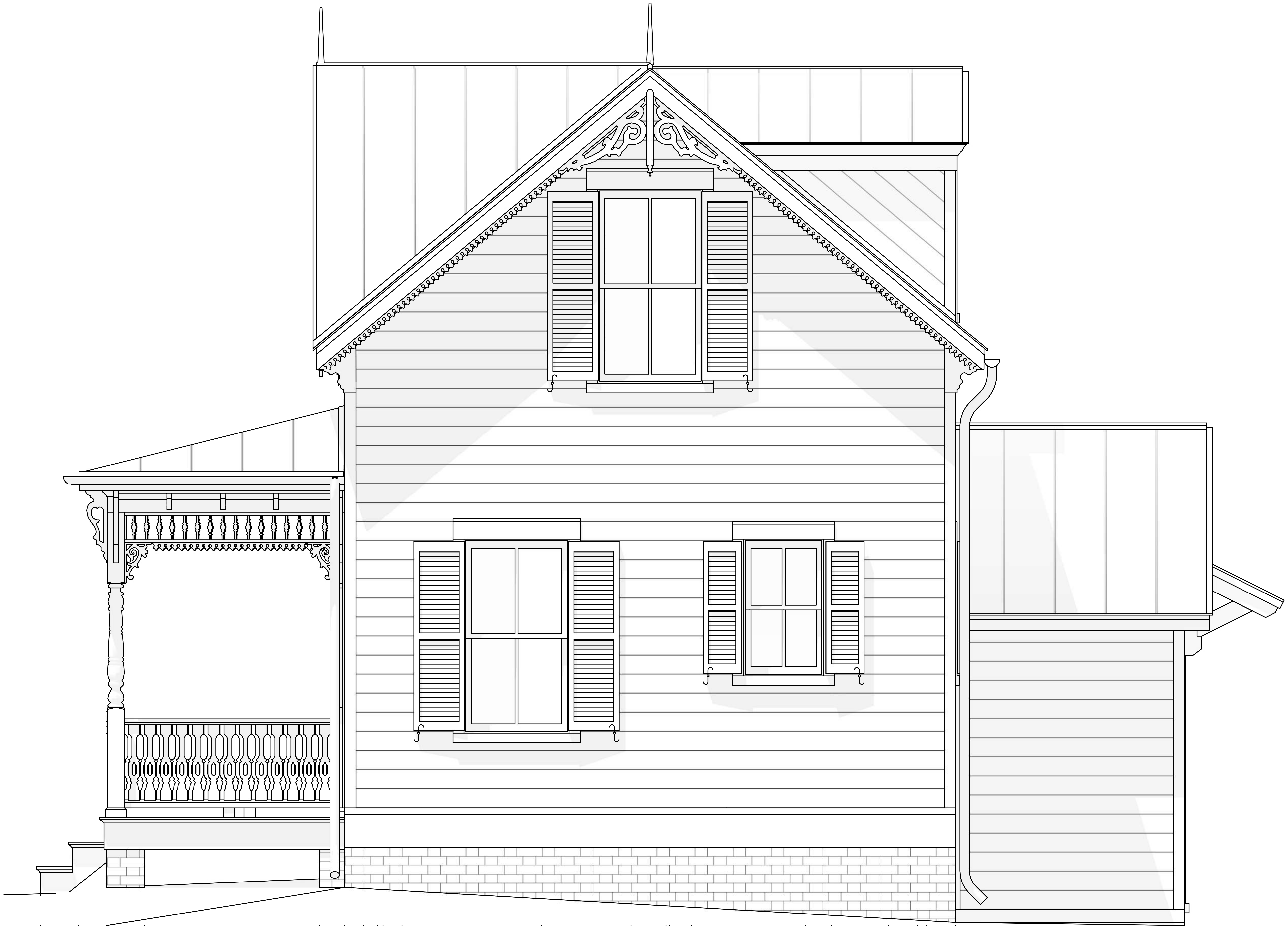
BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

5	**2023-05-30**	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	**2023-04-30**	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	**2023-03-31**	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	**2023-02-28**	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	**2023-11-30**	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

NORTH ELEVATION

A2.2



① EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

attribution cc share-alike

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS
You are encouraged to share, copy, and customize this work. These drawings are generously made available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike License. Some rights reserved.

A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

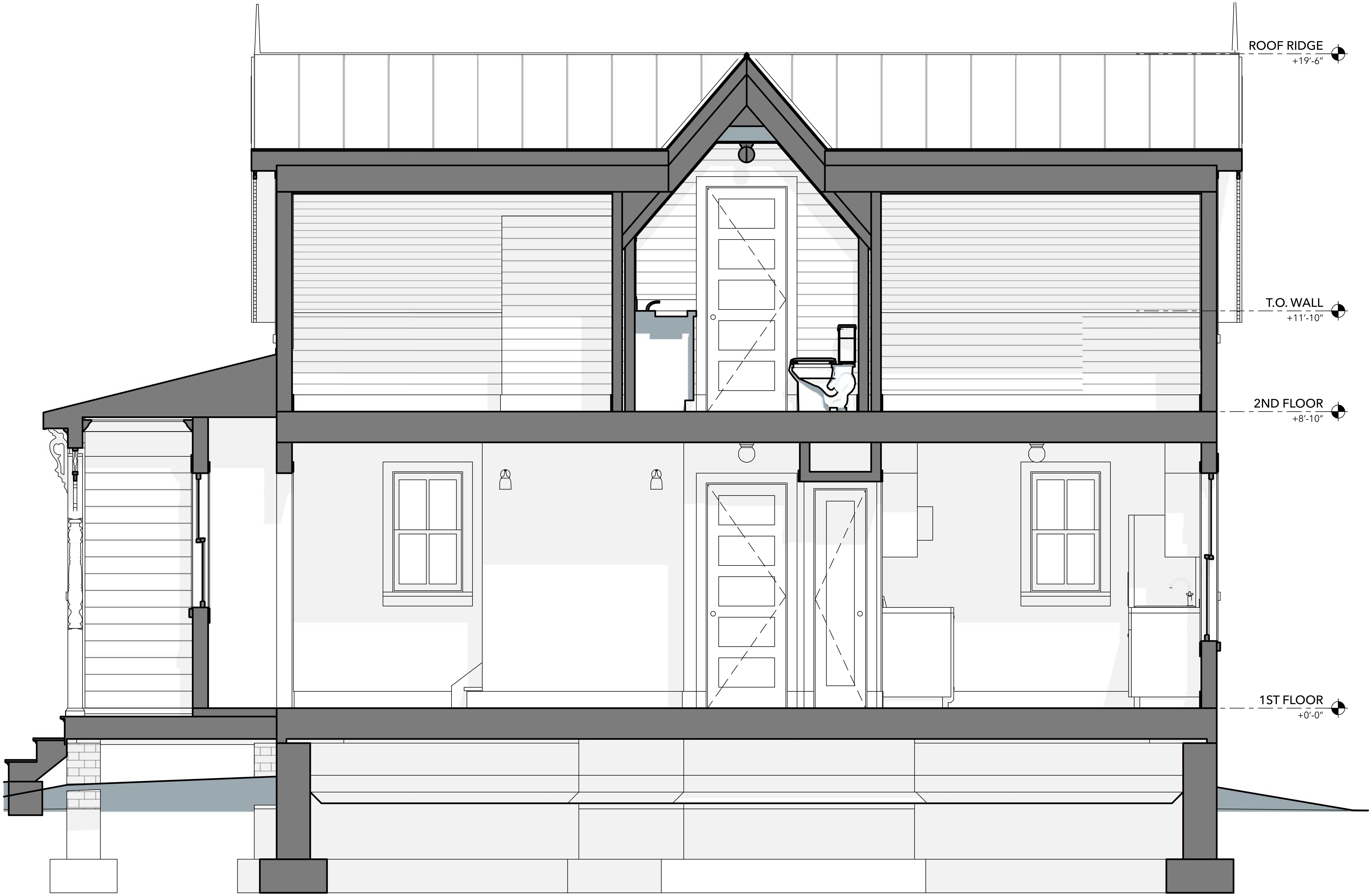
BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

5	**2023-05-30**	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	**2023-04-30**	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	**2023-03-31**	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	**2023-02-28**	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	**2023-11-30**	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

EAST ELEVATION

A2.3



① LONGITUDINAL SECTION

SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

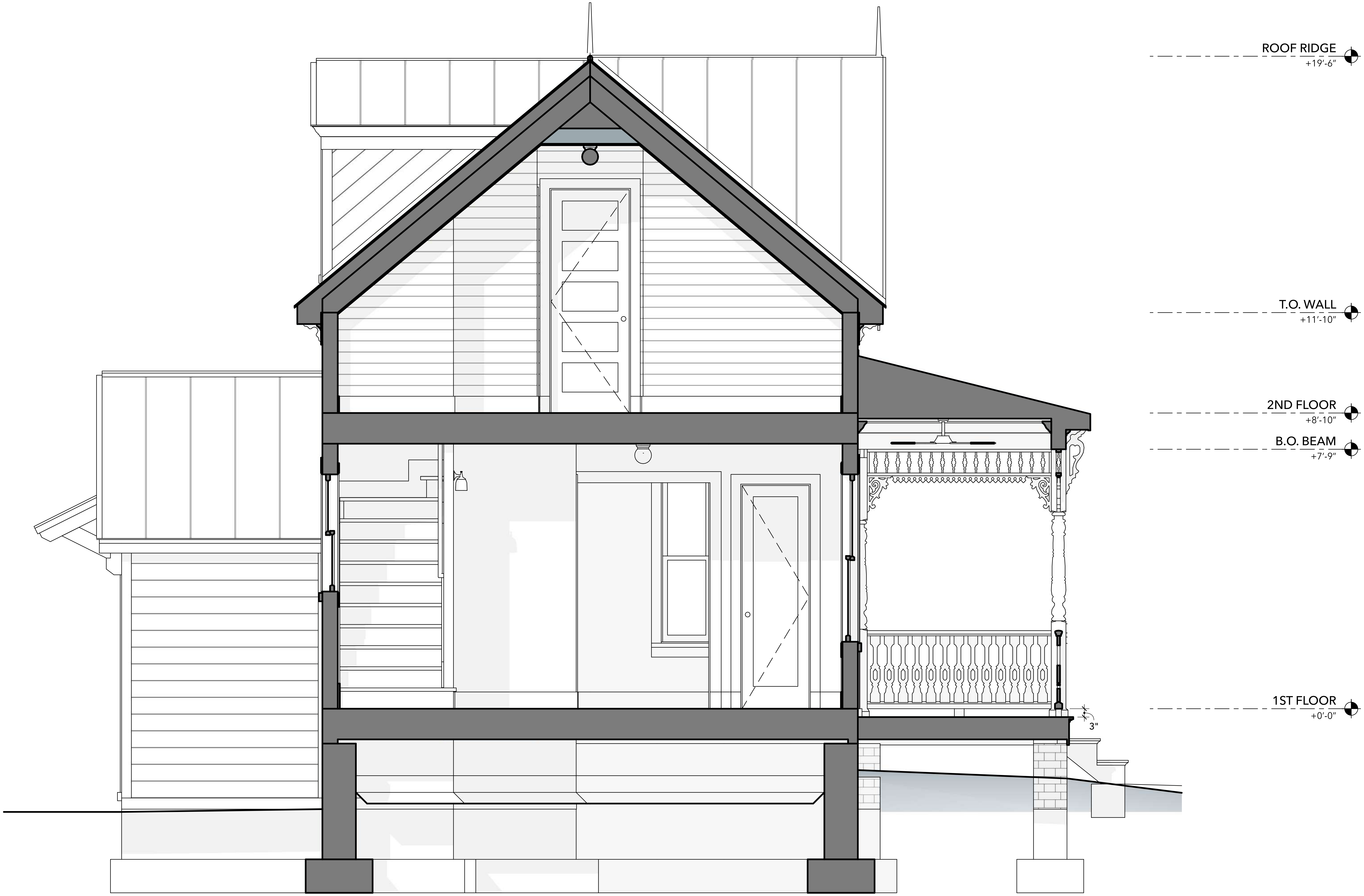
BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

5	**2023-05-30**	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	**2023-04-30**	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	**2023-03-31**	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	**2023-02-28**	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	**2023-11-30**	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

LONGITUDINAL SECTION

A3.0



① TRANSVERSE SECTION 1
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS
You are encouraged to share, copy, and customize this work. These drawings are generously made available under a Creative Commons Attribution Share-Alike License. Some rights reserved.

A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

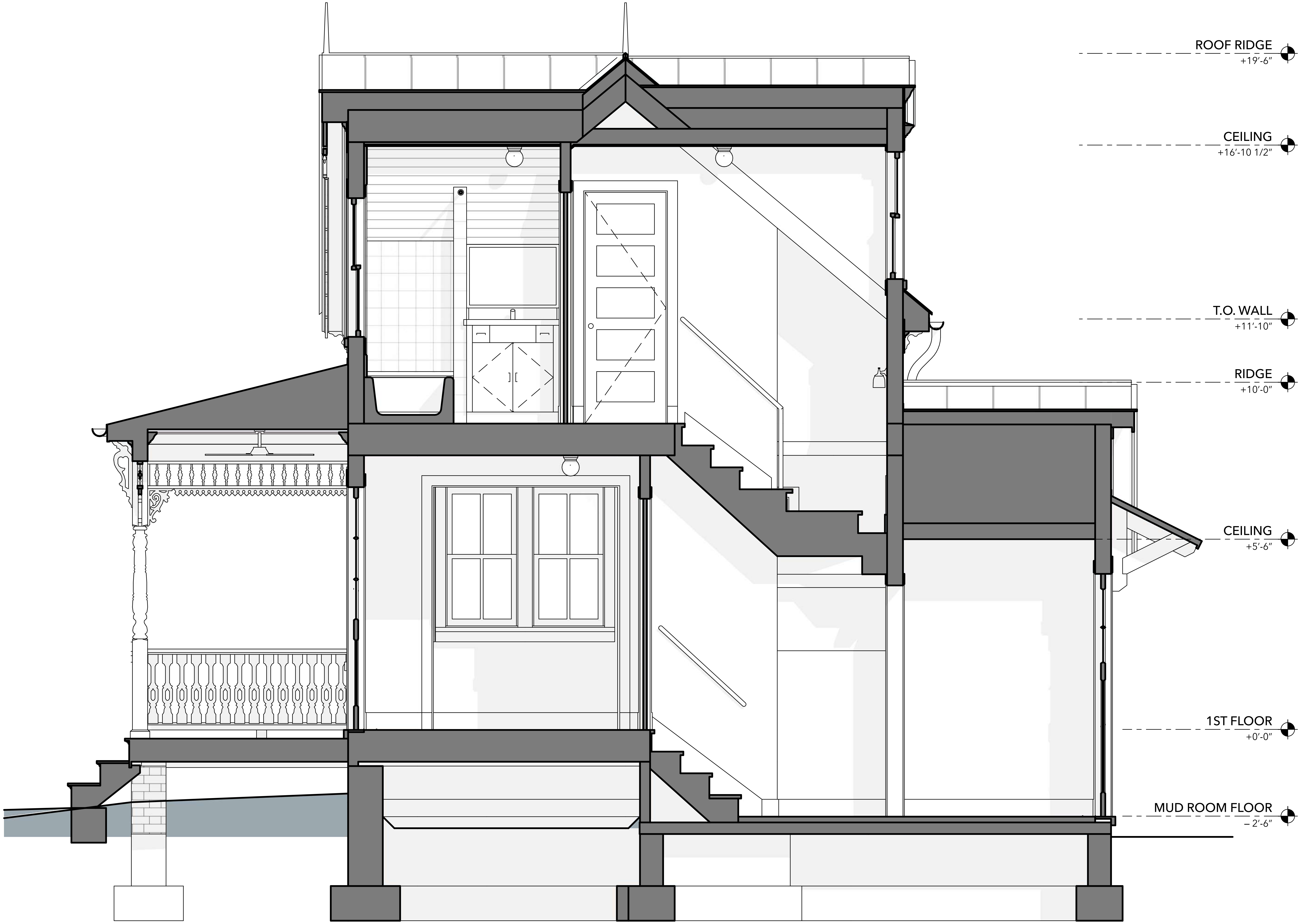
BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

5	2023-05-30	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	2023-04-30	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	2023-03-31	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	2023-02-28	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	2023-11-30	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

TRANSVERSE SECTION

A3.1



① TRANSVERSE SECTION 2
SCALE: 1/2" = 1'-0"

OPEN-SOURCE ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

A DESIGN BY JAY OSBORNE

BACKYARD FARMHOUSE

MAY'S VERSION (16x28)

5	2023-05-30	4TH DRAFT (ORNATE VERSION)
4	2023-04-30	3RD DRAFT (BASEMENT/ ADDITION)
3	2023-03-31	2ND DRAFT (LARGE 16X32 VERSION)
2	2023-02-28	1ST DRAFT (SMALL 16X24 VERSION)
1	2023-11-30	FIRST PRESENTATION (SCHEMATIC)

TRANSVERSE SECTION AT STAIR

A3.2